

herein.

II. OBJECTION TO THE DRAWINGS

Page 2 of the Office Action objects to the drawings stating, "Figure 9 should be designated by a legend such as - -Prior Art- -."

The Applicant respectfully disagrees because Figure 9 is not intended to illustrate what is in the prior art. Please note that Japanese Patent Application discussed prior to introducing Figure 9 in the Specification was not published at the time of the priority date of the Application.

Therefore, the Applicant submits that no change to Figure 9 is needed. Withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

III. REJECTION OF CLAIMS 1-5 AND 7-14 UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102

Pages 2-3 of the Office Action reject claims 1-5 and 7-14 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Yanagisawa et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,805,412 (Hereinafter Yanagisawa).

Claim 1 (as amended) recites, "a first connection part connectable to a unit which expands a function of electronic hardware; a second connection part connectable to the electronic hardware; and an operation part [for the unit] that enables a user to drive the unit independent of driving the unit by the electronic hardware."

Yanagisawa relates to a docking station for a personal computer. However, Yanagisawa does not disclose an operation part that enables a user to drive the unit independent of driving the unit by the electronic hardware. Note that Yanagisawa, Figures 1, 5, 6, 12, and 14-15 illustrate external devices that can be connected to the laptop (i.e. pc cards, IS adapter card, PCI adapter card, SCSI bus, etc.) Note, however, that none of these devices enable a user to drive a unit which expands a function of electronic hardware independent of driving the unit by the electronic hardware. All of the external devices described in Yanagisawa are driven by the laptop itself.

Therefore, claim 1 (as amended) is not anticipated by Yanagisawa.

Claims 2-9 are dependent upon claim 1, which for the above reasons, is not anticipated by Yanagisawa.

Claim 10 recites, "A port replicator connectable to a function expanding device which includes a first connection part connectable to a unit which expands a function of electronic

hardware, a second connection part connectable to the electronic hardware, and an operation part of the unit, said **port replicator comprising: a third connection part connectable to the second connection part of the function expanding device; and a fourth connection part connectable to the electronic hardware.**"

Yanagisawa does not disclose a port replicator that comprises a connection part connectable to another connection part of a function expanding device. No such function expanding device is disclosed in Yanagisawa.

The Office Action states that a first connection (312a, 312b, 324, and 325) is connected to a unit 100 with a second connection part 321 connected to the hardware, and a port replicator 200 having a third connection part 222 connected to the second connection part of the unit and a fourth connector 221 is connected to the hardware. Note, however, that this is not what is claimed.

Note the stated 'first connectors (312a, 312b, 324, and 325)' are actually located on a second docking unit in Yanagisawa (see Yanagisawa, Figure 7). However, the 'third connection part 222' and the 'fourth connector 221' are connected to the first docking unit (considered the port replicator 200 in the rejection). See Yanagisawa, Figures 2 and 7. Thus, this is different than the claimed "port replicator comprising a third connection part connectable to the second connection part of the function expanding device." In Yanagisawa, the 'first connection parts' (designated by the rejection as: 312a, 312b, 324, and 325) are connected to a second docking unit 300 (but not what is considered in the rejection as the port replicator 200), which is not connected to the 'third connection part' (designated by the rejection as: 222) and the 'fourth connection part' (designated by the rejection as: 221).

Therefore, claim 10 is not anticipated by Yanagisawa.

Claim 11 (as amended) recites, "a first connection part connectable selectively to a plurality of units each of which expands a function of electronic hardware; a second connection part connectable to the electronic hardware; and a third connection part connectable to the electronic hardware, said third connection part being used to connect at least one of said plurality of units to the electronic hardware, and said second connection part being used to connect the rest of said plurality of units to the electronic hardware."

Yanagisawa does not disclose that a connection part is used to connect at least one of a plurality of units to the electronic hardware, and that another connection part is used to connect the rest of the plurality of units to the electronic hardware. For example, see Yanagisawa, Figure 14, in which each connector (368, 322, 324, 323, 325, 326) is dedicated to one device.

No such additional connection part is disclosed as recited above.

Therefore, claim 11 is not anticipated by Yanagisawa.

Claims 12 and 13 are dependent upon claim 11, which for the above reasons, is not anticipated by Yanagisawa.

Therefore, in view of the above, withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

IV. REJECTION OF CLAIMS 1-4, 6-9, AND 11-14 UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102

Pages 3-4 of the Office Action reject claims 1-4, 6-9, and 11-14 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Agata et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,064,566 (Hereinafter "Agata").

Claim 1 (as amended) recites, "a first connection part connectable to a unit which expands a function of electronic hardware; a second connection part connectable to the electronic hardware; and an operation part [for the unit] that enables a user to drive the unit independent of driving the unit by the electronic hardware."

Agata relates to a peripheral device that can be used as both an internal device and an external device in a laptop computer. However, the peripheral device is driven by the laptop computer. There is no operation part that enables a user to drive the peripheral device independent of driving the unit by the laptop. When the peripheral device is removed from the laptop (hence the external state), it is still driven by the laptop.

Therefore, claim 1 is not anticipated by Agata.

Claims 2-9 are dependent upon claim 1, which for the above reasons, is not anticipated by Yanagisawa.

Claim 10 recites, "A port replicator connectable to a function expanding device which includes a first connection part connectable to a unit which expands a function of electronic hardware, a second connection part connectable to the electronic hardware, and an operation part of the unit, said port replicator comprising: a third connection part connectable to the second connection part of the function expanding device; and a fourth connection part connectable to the electronic hardware."

Page 3 of the Office Action states that Agata discloses a first connection part 412, a second connection part 414, and a third connection part 534. No fourth connection part is disclosed. Further, the 'third connection part' 534 is not part of a port replicator. The 'second connection part' 414 is also not part of a port replicator.

Moreover, page 3 of the Office Action states, "With respect to the operation part and the control part as claimed; the apparatus of Agata et al. is silent on these matters. However, both the operation and control parts are inherent to a computer system having a drive unit. . ." However, the Applicant submits that it is not inherent that an operation part is related to a function expanding device, as claimed. Further, it is clearly not inherent that an operation part of a unit is connected in the manner claimed.

Therefore, claim 10 is not anticipated by Agata.

Claim 11 (as amended) recites, "a first connection part connectable selectively to a plurality of units each of which expands a function of electronic hardware; a second connection part connectable to the electronic hardware; and a third connection part connectable to the electronic hardware, said third connection part being used to connect at least one of said plurality of units to the electronic hardware, and said second connection part being used to connect the rest of said plurality of units to the electronic hardware."

Agata does not disclose that a connection part is used to connect at least one of a plurality of units to the electronic hardware, and that another connection part is used to connect the rest of the plurality of units to the electronic hardware. In fact, a connecting plurality of units is not even enabled in Agata (See Agata, Figure 5). In Agata, a single unit is connected at a time. Additionally, for each unit connected in Agata, there is be a dedicated connection part.

Therefore, claim 11 is not anticipated by Agata.

Claims 12 and 13 are dependent upon claim 11, which for the above reasons, is not anticipated by Agata.

V. CONCLUSION

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

STAAS & HALSEY LLP

Date: 6-11-02

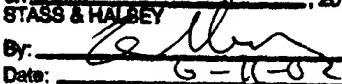
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CERTIFICATE UNDER 37 CFR 1.8(a)

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks, Washington, D.C. 20231

on 6-11, 2002
STAAS & HALSEY

By: 
Date: 6-11-02

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please CANCEL claim 14, without prejudice or disclaimer.

Please AMEND the following claims (all of the claims are listed below, whether or not amended):

1. (ONCE AMENDED) A function expanding device comprising:
a first connection part connectable to a unit which expands a function of electronic hardware;
a second connection part connectable to the electronic hardware; and
an operation part [for the unit] that enables a user to drive the unit independent of driving the unit by the electronic hardware.
2. (AS UNAMENDED) A function expanding device according to claim 1, further comprising a control part which may control the unit independent of the electronic hardware.
3. (AS UNAMENDED) A function expanding device according to claim 1, wherein said operation part may power on at least part of the electronic hardware.
4. (AS UNAMENDED) A function expanding device according to claim 2, wherein said control part may transmit operational information of the operation part to the electronic hardware.
5. (ONCE AMENDED) A function expanding device according to claim 1, wherein said second connection part is connectable to a port [replicater] replicator, and connectable to the electronic hardware via the port [replicater] replicator.
6. (AS UNAMENDED) A function expanding device according to claim 1, wherein said second connection part has a cable.

7. (AS UNAMENDED) A function expanding device according to claim 1, further comprising

a display part which displays a status of the unit.

8. (AS UNAMENDED) A function expanding device according to claim 1, wherein the unit is selected from a group including a music CD drive, a CD-ROM drive, a DVD-ROM drive, and an LS-120 drive, and said first connection part has a bay structure connectable compatibly to either drive in the group.

9. (AS UNAMENDED) A function expanding device according to claim 1, wherein said second connector has an IDE interface and a music interface.

10. (ONCE AMENDED) A port [replicater] replicator connectable to a function expanding device which includes a first connection part connectable to a unit which expands a function of electronic hardware, a second connection part connectable to the electronic hardware, and an operation part of the unit, said port [replicater] replicator comprising:

a third connection part connectable to the second connection part of the function expanding device; and

a fourth connection part connectable to the electronic hardware.

11. (ONCE AMENDED) A function expanding device comprising:
a first connection part connectable selectively to a plurality of units each of which expands a function of electronic hardware;

a second connection part connectable to the electronic hardware; and

a third connection part connectable to the electronic hardware, said third connection part being used to connect at least one of said plurality of units to the electronic hardware, and said second connection part being used to connect the rest of said plurality of units to the electronic hardware.

12. (AS UNAMENDED) A function expanding device according to claim 11, wherein said second and third connection parts are used to connect to the electronic hardware the unit connectable to the first connection part, but connect different units to the electronic hardware.

13. (AS UNAMENDED) A function expanding device according to claim 11, wherein said second connection part is used to connect to the electronic hardware at least one of said plurality of units connectable to the first connection part, and

wherein said third connection part is used to connect to the electronic hardware at least one of the units connectable to the first connection part, which unit is different from the unit connectable by the second connection part.